

is more difficult now to convince workers to organize a union than before. So why does big labor want to change this system? They don't want to ever lose these elections. Even though they win most of these elections, union membership has declined significantly in the past few years. The percentage of employees in labor unions is down from 20 percent in 1983 to 12 percent today. Because labor unions simply are not as attractive to workers as they once were, labor bosses have come to Congress to demand a legislative mandate designed to circumvent private ballot elections. They want more dues-paying members.

Throughout this debate, there is a clear example of hypocrisy in the argument in favor of the new card check system. Under current law, the process to certify a union is the same as the process to decertify a union. However, this bill and its supporters are silent on this matter. Apparently, they believe that when it comes to removing a union, workers will be best served by a secret ballot. But when it comes to forming one, they don't deserve that protection. This kind of logic and inconsistency is further proof that this proposal is half-baked and indefensible.

Congress should not empower big labor bosses by depriving individual workers of their right to be free of intimidation. Taking away private ballot elections and subjecting workers to undue pressure and coercion goes against the basic principles on which this country was founded. The secret ballot election must be protected at the workplace.

I understand the new majority in Congress feels they owe a great deal of debt to their allies in big labor for the success they enjoyed in November of 2006. That is why we are considering this flawed bill. As the majority, they can bring up any piece of legislation they choose. Fair enough. However, this bill is purely political payback in its worst kind of policy. I urge my colleagues—which they have done in the first instance—to vote against considering this piece of legislation, as they did when we had our cloture vote earlier today.

This is a personal aside. In 1964, I was a professional athlete. We were forming a players' union at the time so we could compete with the owners on an equal basis when it came to negotiations. We acquired 30 percent of the signatures from our players and we had an election. But it was a private-ballot election and 85 percent of the ballots collected were in favor of forming that union. I think the same should go with every union that is trying to be formed under the circumstances in today's market. Not only did we form a union, we formed one of the most successful unions in the history of the United States of America. Now all players at the major league level are covered by that union and represented by that union. The benefits derived by that player union in major league baseball

have been significant—the same as most unions would have when they do it correctly with a private ballot.

I thank my colleagues for voting against cloture today. I urge them, if it comes back to the floor again, to do likewise.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

#### RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. REID. Madam President, at 2:15, the amendment was 10 minutes away. We called a few minutes ago and it is now 5 minutes away. I don't know how time is kept in the legislative office, but I understand that people have made minor changes and that has caused the need to reprint part of the amendment. I wish to waste as little time as possible. I think it will be a few more minutes, so maybe we can adjourn subject to the call of the Chair, and as soon as it gets here, I will let everyone know.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 3:54 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair until 5:38 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SALAZAR).

#### COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to proceed to S. 1639 is agreed to.

Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of S. 1639, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1639) to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Calendar No. 208, S. 1639, Immigration.

Ted Kennedy, Russell D. Feingold, Daniel K. Inouye, Tom Carper, Sheldon Whitehouse, Pat Leahy, Richard J. Durbin, Benjamin L. Cardin, Ken Salazar, Frank R. Lautenberg, Joe Lieberman, Dianne Feinstein, John Kerry, Charles Schumer, Ben Nelson, B. A. Mikulski, Harry Reid.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that there be a limitation of 26 first-degree amendments

to S. 1639, the immigration bill. This is the list of the 13 Democratic amendments, the 12 Republican amendments, and 1 managers' amendment, which each are at the desk; that there be a time limitation of 1 hour equally divided for each amendment; that they be subject to relevant second-degree amendments under the same time limitation; and that upon the disposition of the amendments, the bill be read the third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DEMINT. I object, Mr. President. We just received the substitute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina objects.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I renew my request and ask that we have an hour and a half per amendment, with the same conditions I just propounded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, how about 2 hours per amendment, with the same conditions and provisions in the previous unanimous consent requests I made.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. COBURN. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, with all deference to the majority leader, this procedure has excluded many of us from our right to offer amendments on the floor. I think he understands our discomfort with this process. There will not be an amount of time that will pave over the loss of our rights to offer amendments on this very important bill that needs to be dealt with. So it is not in terms of trying to delay what the majority leader is trying to do, but there is not going to be a period of time on this particular set of amendments, unless there is a set of amendments that we will be allowed, as Senators in the United States of America, to offer on behalf of our constituencies.

Mr. REID. So I take it there is an objection.

Mr. COBURN. Yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is objection.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I say to my distinguished friend, the junior Senator from Oklahoma, he always comes directly to the point. I appreciate him and his objection.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 1934

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I tried to line up these 26 amendments for debate and vote. We have been told that no matter what the time per amendment is that would be allocated, that is not good enough. I also included second-degree amendments. That was objected to. I have no choice but to offer, after consultation with the Republican leadership, an amendment that contains these Democratic and Republican amendments and ask that it be divided